AGING WELL

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(formerly CONCERN Services)

TriHealth EAP is a part of the Corporate Health division of the TriHealth Healthcare System. We provide:

• Assessment
• Referral
• Counseling
• Crisis Intervention

• Work/life services
• Management Consultation
• Workplace Training

AGING WELL

• Aging is a natural process that begins the day we are born, and progresses throughout our lives.
• It is a combination of biological, social, psychological, and spiritual factors.
• Getting older is inevitable. But we do have control over many of the factors that determine how well we age.
• When we think of aging well, we think of good health, high mental functioning, and a positive quality of life.
• So what occurs as we get older, and how can we take actions now to positively affect our lives as we get older?
OUR EYESIGHT CHANGES

- We lose the sight of close objects.
- We have a decrease in peripheral vision.
- Our night vision decreases, and we're more sensitive to glare.
- Our ability to distinguish color decreases.
- We have reduced tears, which can result in dry, itchy eyes.
- We may experience posterior vitreous detachment.

OUR ABILITY TO HEAR DECLINES

- We have more difficulty hearing, particularly higher frequency sounds.
- We have trouble hearing through background noise.
- We have difficulty locating the origin of sounds.
- We become more sensitive to loud noises
- We become more susceptible to tinnitus.

TO ADDRESS CHANGES TO OUR SENSES

- See an Optometrist annually.
- Report any unusual affects to your optometrist.
- Use reading glasses
- Reduce glare, use “warm color” lights, and keep lighting equal.
- Obtain regular hearing exams.
- Know the signs of hearing loss.
- Quit smoking cigarettes.
- Learn how to manage the environment to foster better communication.
WE EXPERIENCE ACTIVITY DIFFERENTLY

- Our lung capacity decreases
- Our hearts become less efficient.
- We have a loss of muscle mass, with an accompanying loss of strength.
- Our skin becomes drier & less elastic.
- Our skin bruises & tears more easily, and wounds take longer to heal.
- Balance and coordination decline.
- We often gain unwanted weight, while eating the same amount of food.

ONE POWERFUL “ANTIDOTE” IS EXERCISE

- Exercise is essential as we age.
- It rebuilds muscle tissue, which results in a faster metabolism, which burns more calories.
- It increases bone density and prevents osteoporosis.
- It boosts the quality of sleep.
- It improves cardiovascular strength.
- It improves the person’s flexibility and range of motion.
- It recently has been proven to increase cognitive abilities.
- It can prevent and regulate the disease of diabetes.

TIPS FOR ADDING EXERCISE

- Check with your physician before starting any exercise program.
- Find activities you like and which will keep you motivated.
- Start slowly, starting with even just a few minutes a day.
- Stick to a regular routine.
- Obtain support from others.
- Keep a log of your activities.
- Stretch thoroughly before and after exercising.
- Choose a full range of activities, utilizing the physical activity pyramid.
EATING HEALTHY IS ESSENTIAL AS WE AGE

- Diet is one of the important contributors to longevity and healthy living.
- A healthy diet is more important as we age, because it is harder for the body to digest some vitamins.
- Taste and smell diminish with age, which often leads to eating more salt and sugary foods.
- A healthy diet counteracts many of the effects of age, such as weight gain, and helps prevent diseases such as osteoporosis, diabetes, and heart disease.

NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES AS WE AGE

- Follow the Food Pyramid.
- Avoid additives and eat more whole grain foods.
- Eat some type of seafood at least twice a week.
- Include calcium-rich foods such as milk, cheese, and collards.
- Drink lots of water throughout the day.
- Make meals a social event, eating with others.
- Use herbs & spices to season food instead of salt.
- Talk to your doctor about possible vitamin supplements.
- Eat fruit and vegetables in a variety of different colors.
COLOR | ATTRIBUTES
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Red | High in vitamin C, folate and fiber. Reduces inflammation
Orange & Yellow | Cancer fighting, reduces the risk of stroke, promotes heart health, fosters the immune system
Green | Protects vision, lowers risk of some cancers, promotes strong bones and teeth
Blue and Purple | Lowers risk of some cancers, improves memory, reverses mental decline, improves urinary tract
White | Promotes heart health, supports lowered cholesterol, lowers the risk of some cancers

**OUR QUALITY OF SLEEP CHANGES**
- A good night’s sleep is essential to our health as we age.
- However, our quality of sleep changes as we get older.
- Our bodies produce less growth hormone, so we experience less REM sleep (deep sleep).
- We produce less melatonin, which results in more rapid sleep cycles and more awakenings between the cycles.
- Women in menopause often have interrupted sleep.
- As a result we feel less rested in the mornings.
- There is also a high prevalence of sleep disorders as we age, such as sleep apnea and restless leg syndrome.

**FOR BETTER SLEEP, IT HELPS TO:**
- Be active and engaged during the day.
- Expose yourself to more sunlight.
- Try not to take naps during the day.
- Adopt a more positive outlook on life.
- Have an outlet for stresses and negative emotions you experience through the day.
- Reduce the amount of caffeine you drink.
- Change your bedtime to match your exhaustion level.
AND AT NIGHT, IT HELPS TO:

- Go to bed at the same time each night.
- Turn down lights and avoid the television, computer, or backlit devices one hour before bedtime.
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and cool, and your bed is comfortable.
- Use intimacy and touch to be soothed into sleep.
- Develop a "pre-sleep time," with bedtime rituals.
- Limit the use of sleep aids or sleeping pills.
- See a doctor for a sleep disorder.

THERE ARE SOME COGNITIVE CHANGES WITH AGE

- There are some significant changes to our brains as we age.
- However, a well person can expect high mental competence well past the age of 80.
- Studies show that with age comes wisdom, increased creativity, problem-solving abilities, and an increase in "stored memory."
- As we age, it is important to stay mentally active.
- Any decline in performance is usually limited to the storing of new information, and difficulty with memory.

OUR MEMORY DECLINES

- We often do have difficulties with memory as a normal part of the aging process.
- The memory center of the brain deteriorates with age.
- We have difficulty with retrieving words, particularly nouns.
- It takes us longer to learn any new information.
- We have more trouble paying attention to more than one thing at a time, and are easily distracted by background noise.
TRICKS TO REMEMBERING

- Pay active attention.
- Repeat back information.
- Keep to a set routine.
- Use mnemonic devices.
- Attach feelings to memories.
- Eliminate distractions.
- Have a set location for items.
- Write important things down.
- Get adequate sleep.
- Keep a calendar.
- Stay socially active.

STAYING MENTALLY ACTIVE

- Do puzzles and games.
- Volunteer in the community.
- Learn something new, like a language, a musical instrument, or a martial art.
- Attend lectures, plays, art shows, and concerts.
- Learn something new, like a language, a new course of study, computers, a musical instrument, or a martial art.
- Read new books & discuss with friends.
- Travel and explore new locations and/or countries.
- Incorporate “brain foods” into our daily meals.

OUR SUPPORT NETWORK CHANGES

- As we age, we experience changes in our social networks.
- Some are developmental, such as children leaving home, or retirement.
- Others are crises that occur more often with aging, such as the death of parents and friends.
- Because of all the social changes, it is important to keep “reinventing ourselves” as we go through each landmark age of 50, 60, 70, & 80.
- Keeping our social lives active is important for our emotional and physical health, and our basic survival.
NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS AS WE AGE

- Keeping strong family ties
- Connecting regularly with a group of friends
- Volunteering to help others in the community
- Caring for pets and plants
- Making new friendships throughout our lives
- Regularly engaging in outside social activities
- Having friendships with younger persons
- Passing on wisdom to a younger generation
- Staying connected through social network sites
- Using support groups in times of crisis and change

WE HAVE A GOOD CAPACITY FOR HAPPINESS

- Many of us learned to improve our “emotional regulation,” by focusing on the positives.
- Whether we’re happy in our older lives often depends on whether we feel personal control, including independence, dignity, and self-worth.
- Some pathways to happiness in older age include making peace with the aging process, maintaining a playful spirit, keeping a good sense of humor.

WITH GOOD PREPARATION, A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND A POSITIVE OUTLOOK, WE CAN BETTER ENSURE A GREAT QUALITY OF LIFE AS WE AGE.